DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 120 JC 900 036

AUTHOR Friedlander, Jack
TITLE Evaluation of Santa Barbara City College's Matriculation Program (1983-1988).
INSTITUTION Santa Barbara City Coll., Calif.
PUB DATE Dec 89
NOTE 29p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Persistence; Ancillary School Services; Community Colleges; Comparative Analysis; Dropout Prevention; Educational Trends; *Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; *School Holding Power; *Student Characteristics; *Student Personnel Services; Two Year Colleges; Two Year College Students

ABSTRACT

Since 1983, Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) has invested resources in a comprehensive matriculation program to help students achieve their educational objectives. In each of the 6 subsequent years, the college has added components to its matriculation program and refined others. An evaluation of the program was conducted in 1989, comparing students who entered SBCC for the first time in fall 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988 on the basis of their academic persistence, units completed with passing grades, scores on assessment tests, probationary status, and other measures of progress over a 2-year period. Major findings of the evaluation were as follows: (1) first-to-second semester persistence rates increased by 17.7% from 1983 to 1988; (2) the persistence rates of first-time-in-college students were substantially higher than those of students who transferred to SBCC from another college; (3) of matriculated students who enrolled at SBCC for three consecutive semesters, close to 90% returned for a fourth semester; (4) in 1988, the first-to-second semester persistence rate of transfer-oriented students (76%) was substantially greater than that of non-transfer-oriented students (65%); (5) semester-to-semester persistence rates among ethnic groups were fairly comparable between 1985 and 1988; and (6) course completion and college persistence rates were substantially higher for day students and full-time students than for evening students and part-time students. (JMC)

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Evaluation of Santa Barbara City College's Matriculation Program

(1983–1988)

by

Dr. Jack Friedlander
Dean, Academic Affairs

JC900036

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December, 1989

EVALUATION OF SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE'S MATRICULATION PROGRAM

1983 - 1988

Since 1983, Santa Barbara City College has made a substantial investment of resources in its comprehensive matriculation program to help students achieve their educational objective of earning a certificate, a degree, and/or transfer to a four-year college or university. In each of the past six years the college has added components to its Matriculation Program and it has refined others. Thus, the influence of the Matriculation Program has had on the indicators of success it is designed to effect should be greater for students who entered the college in Fall 1988 than for those who entered in Fall 1983, the year before the program was implemented.

METHOD

The six comparison groups in this study are matriculated students who entered SBCC for the first time in Fall, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988. A computer program was written to track the progress of each of these groups of first-time matriculated over a two-year period. Given the steady increase in resources, additions in components, and refinements of procedures that have been incorporated into the matriculation program each year since 1983-84, we should expect to see an increase on such measures as course completion rates in students' first two semesters at the college and the percentage of first-time matriculated students who persist at SBCC for a second, third, and fourth semester.

RESULTS

Persistence Rates

There has been a steady increase in semester-to-semester college persistence rates of new matriculated students who entered the college from 1983-1988. As shown in *Table 1*, the first-to-second semester persistence rate for new matriculated students increased from 62% in 1983, to 68% in 1987, to 73% in 1988. This represents an increase of 17.7% from 1983 to 1988.

Table 1

PERSISTENCE RATES OF NEW MATRICULATED STUDENTS: 1983-1988

Percentage of Students in Original Class

Year Entered College		1st-to-2nd Sem.	1st-to-3rd Sem.	1st-to-4th Sem.	1st-to-5th Sem.
1983	(N=1,834)	62%	41%	34%	25%
1984	(N=2,025)	64%	42%	37%	24%
1985	(N=2,240)	65%	43%	38%	27%
1986	(N=2,514)	67%	45%	38%	27%
1987	(N=2,729)	68%	44%	39%	25%
1988	(N=2,822)	73%	48%		

As shown in Table 2, the semester-to-semester persistence rates of new matriculated students (first time in college) were substantially higher than those of new matricuated students who transferred to SBCC from another college. Of the new matriculated students who entered the college in Fall 1988, 75% returned the following semester compared to 70% of the matriculated students who transferred to SBCC from another college or university. The differences between these two groups of students in their first-to-third semester persistence rates were even more pronounced (54% vs. 39%).

Table 2

PERSISTENCE RATES OF NEW MATRICULATED STUDENTS WHO ENTERED COLLEGE FOR THE FIRST TIME VS. NEW MATRICULATED STUDENTS WHO TRANSFERRED TO SBCC FROM ANOTHER COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY (1985-1988)

Year Entered College	N	1st-to-2nd Sem.	1st-to-3rd Sem.	1st-to-4th Sem.
1985				
New	1,436	67%	47%	42%
New Transfer	803	61%	34%	29%
1986				
New	1,575	67%	49%	43%
New Transfer	940	66%	37%	31%
1987				
New	1,713	73%	52%	46%
New Transfer	1,015	61%	33%	30%
1988				
New	1,906	75%	54%	
New Transfer	919	70%	39%	

Of those matriculated students who were enrolled in the college for three consecutive semesters, close to 90% returned for a fourth semester *(Table 3)*.

Table 3

PERSISTENCE RATES OF NEW VS. NEW TRANSFER MATRICULATED STUDENTS WHO WERE ENROLLED IN THE PRIOR SEMESTER (1985-1988)

Year Entered College	N	1st-to-2nd Sem.	2nd-to-3rd Sem.	3rd-to-4th Sem.
1985				
New	1,436	67%	71%	90%
New Transfer	803	61%	57%	83%
1986				
New	1,575	67%	74%	87%
New Transfer	940	66%	56%	83%
1987				
New	1,713	73%	71%	90%
New Transfer	1,015	61%	53%	91%
1988				
New	1,906	75%	72%	
New Transfer	919	70%	56%	

Transfer vs. Non-Transfer Students

The percentage of first time matriculated students entering SBCC with the intent of transferring to a four-year college or university has increased from 69% in 1985 to 78% in 1988. As shown in *Table 4*, the first-to second-semester persistence rate of transfer-oriented matriculated students who entered SBCC in Fall 1988 was substantially greater than that of non-transfer oriented matriculated students (76% vs. 65%).

Table 4

PERSISTENCE RATES OF STUDENTS WHO WERE ENROLLED IN THE PRIOR SEMESTER

Year Entered College	1st Sem.	1st-to-2nd Sem.	1st-to 3rd Sem.	1st-to-4th Sem.
1983				
Transfer	1551 69%	1083 70%	701 45%	608 39%
Non-transfer	689 31%	368 53%	255 37%	233 34%
1986				
Transfer	1833 73%	1306 71%	846 46%	753 41%
Non-transfer	682 27%	373 55%	281 41%	215 32%
1987				
Transfer	2072 76%	1482 72%	960 46%	877 42%
Non-transfer	657 24%	384 58%	254 39%	216 33%
1988				
Transfer	2203 78%	1671 76%		
Non-transfer	623 22%	408 65%		

Comparisons by Ethnicity

The semester-to-semester college persistence rates among the various ethnic groups has been fairly comparable over the past three years. In fact, the difference between the ethnic group with the highest first-to-second semester persistence rate and the group with the lowest rate has been within 5% for the past three years *(Table 5)*.

Table 5

FIRST-TO-SECOND SEMESTER PERSISTENCE RATES BY ETHNICITY

Year Entered College	1985	1986	1987	1988
TOTAL	65%	67%	68%	73%
ASIAN	72%	69%	70%	73%
BLACK	59%	65%	67%	73%
HISPANIC	56%	63%	64%	70%
WHITE	66%	68%	69%	73%

The percentage of first semester units completed with a passing grade has increased from 64% in 1985 to 68% in Fall 1988. The percentage of second semester units completed by matriculated students with a passing grade rose from 67% in Spring 1986 to 71% in Spring 1989.

Table 6

PERCENTAGE OF UNITS COMPLETED WITH PASSING GRADES

Year Entered College	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	3rd Sem.	4th Sem.
1985	64%	67%	73%	72%
1986	67%	69%	71%	71%
1987	67%	67%	74%	73%
1988	68%	71%	--	--

Course Completion Rates

The percentage of first and second semester units completed with a passing grade for matriculated students who entered the college in Fall 1988 was fairly similar among students in the different ethnic groups.

Table 7

PERCENT OF FIRST & SECOND SEMESTER UNITS COMPLETED WITH PASSING GRADES

	First Semester	Second Semester
ASIAN	70%	74%
BLACK	64%	66%
HISPANIC	63%	67%
WHITE	68%	71%
TOTAL	68%	71%

Relationship between Assessment Test Scores and Performance

The majority of matriculated students entered the college with college-level skills in both English and math. As shown in Table 8, black students were much more likely to enter the college with deficiencies in both English and math than students in the other ethnic groups.

Table 8

SCORES ON ASSESSMENT TESTS BY ETHNIC GROUP*

Year Entered College	N	Read- Math-	Read- Math+	Read+ Math-	Read+ Math+
Fall 1987					
Total	2729	44%	10%	27%	19%
Asian	92	49%	30%	6%	15%
Black	87	66%	16%	9%	9%
Hispanic	345	66%	7%	17%	10%
Other	101	40%	14%	21%	25%
White	2103	41%	9%	30%	20%
Fall 1988					
Total	2822	45%	9%	26%	20%
Asian	97	54%	23%	8%	15%
Black	89	82%	4%	8%	6%
Hispanic	484	70%	8%	14%	8%
Other	105	45%	17%	23%	15%
White	2047	39%	9%	30%	22%

**NOTE:* *Students who had taken one assessment test but not the other are not included in these figures.*

The semester-to-semester college persistence rates were substantially greater for new matriculated students who participated in the matriculation program than for those who did not do so. As illustrated in *Table 9*, the first-to-second-semester college persistence rates ranged from a high of 85% for those with college-level skills in English and math, to 77% for those with deficiencies in both English and math, to 53% for those who did not participate in the assessment and advisement components of the matriculation program (no test score).

Table 9

Semester-to-Semester Persistence Rates by Test Score Fall 1988

	First-to-Second Sem.	First-to-Third Sem.
No Test Score	53%	20%
-Read -Math	77%	52%
-Read +Math	83%	63%
+Read -Math	79%	59%
+Read +Math	85%	63%

NOTE: *— = Needs Remediation.* *+ = College-level skills*

As shown in *Table 9*, only one-in-five of the matriculated students who did not participate in the assessment program (no test score) when they entered the college in fall 1987 returned to the college the following fall (third semester).

The percentage of new matriculated students (first time in college) who had not taken the assessment tests was substantially lower than the percentage of new matriculated students who transferred to SBCC from another college or university. The percentage of new matriculated students (first time in college) who did not take the assessment tests dropped from 23% for those entering the college in Fall 1985 to 14% for those entering in Fall 1988.

Of the matriculated students who entered the college in fall 1988, 14% were on academic progress probation at the end of the first semester and 27% were on academic progress probation at the end of their second semester. The percentage of students on academic progress probation at the end of the second semester was substantially higher for those who entered the college with deficiencies in basic English and math skills than for those with college-level skills in these areas (35% vs. 16%).

Table 10

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCORES ON THE ASSESSMENT TESTS & PROBATIONARY STATUS AFTER FIRST & SECOND SEMESTERS ENTERED IN FALL 1988

Scores on Assessment	*Probationary Status* First Sem.	Second Sem.
All Matr. Students	14%	27%
+Read +Math	15%	16%
+Read -Math	15%	31%
-Read +Math	14%	23%
-Read -Math	15%	35%
No test scores	13%	21%

NOTE: *— = Needs Remediation.* *+ = College-level skills*

Matriculated students who entered the college in fall 1988 with college-level skills in English and math were much more likely than those entering with deficiencies in both of these basic skills areas to complete a greater percentage of their first semester (74% vs. 64%) and second semester (80% vs. 66%) units with a passing grade.

Table 11

Percentage of First & Second Semester Units Completed by Scores on Assessment Tests

(Entered College in Fall 1988)

NOTE: *— = Needs Remediation.* *+ = College-level skills*

	First Semester	Second Semester
No Test Score	65%	68%
-Read -Math	64%	66%
-Read +Math	76%	76%
+Read -Math	66%	69%
+Read +Math	74%	80%

Day vs. Evening Students

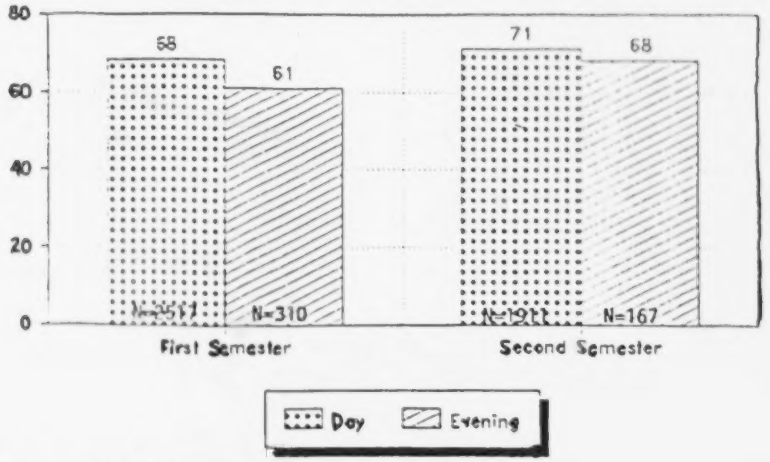
As illustrated in *Table 12 and 13,* the course completion rates and college persistence rates of day students were substantially greater than those of evening students.

Table 12

PERSISTENCE RATE BY DAY/EVENING STUDENTS

Year Entered College	N	1st-to-2nd Sem.	1st-to-3rd Sem.	1st-to-4th Sem.
1985				
Day	1982	67%	44%	39%
Evening	258	46%	31%	23%
1986				
Day	2253	68%	45%	40%
Evening	262	56%	39%	28%
1987				
Day	2470	71%	46%	41%
Evening	258	48%	33%	32%
1988				
Day	2513	76%	51%	
Evening	309	54%	34%	

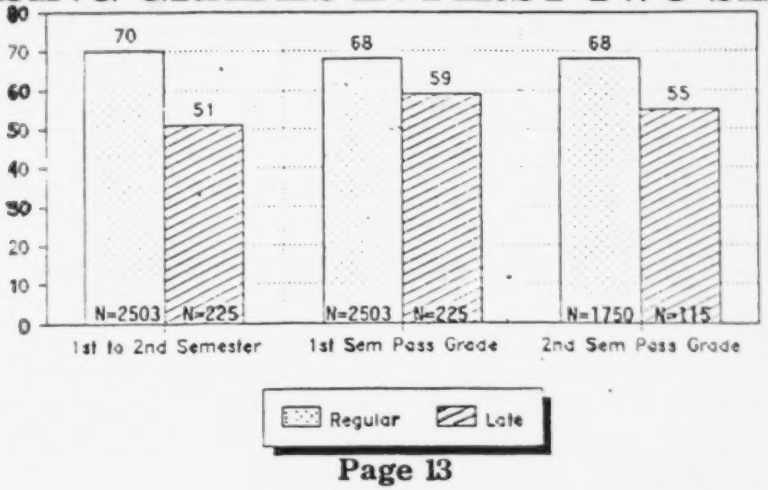
Table 13
PERCENTAGE OF FIRST & SECOND SEMESTER GRADES COMPLETED WITH PASSING GRADES BY UNITS ENROLLED



Regular vs. Late Registration

The course completion rates and college persistence rates of students who enrolled during the regular registration period were much higher than those of students who enrolled in the college during the first two weeks of the semester (late registration). The number of new matriculated students enrolled in the college during the late registration period has declined from a high of 297 in Fall 1985 to a low of 98 in Fall 1989.

Table 14
REGULAR VS. LATE REGISTERED STUDENTS BY PERSISTENCE RATES & PERCENTAGE OF PASSING GRADES IN FIRST TWO SEMESTER



Declared vs. Non-Declared Major

The percentage of new matriculated students who declared a major in their first semester of college has increased from 51% in Fall 1985, to 66% in Fall 1987, to 70% in Fall 1988. Prior to Fall 1988, the differences in persistence rates between declared and non-declared matriculation students was minor. However, the fall-to-spring persistence rate of students who entered SBCC in Fall 1988 was much higher for declared students than for non-declared students (77% vs. 64%).

Table 15

PERSISTENCE RATES OF DECLARED VS. NON-DECLARED STUDENTS

Year Entered College	% in Category	1st to 2nd Sem.	1st to 3rd Sem.	1st to 4th Sem.
1985				
Declared	51%	66%	52%	52%
Non-Declared	49%	63%	34%	23%
1986				
Declared	65%	66%	46%	42%
Non-Declared	35%	69%	43%	32%
1987				
Declared	66%	69%	47%	46%
Non-Declared	34%	67%	39%	28%
1988				
Declared	70%	77%	52%	
Non-Declared	30%	64%	42%	

Full-time vs. Part-time Students

Full-time students had higher course completion rates and higher college persistence rates than part-time students. Comparisons of full-time (12 or more units) vs. part-time (1-3 units) students who entered the college in Fall 1988 showed that the full-time students had completed a higher percentage of their first semester courses with a passing grade (72% vs. 56%) and had higher first-to-second semester persistence rates (87% vs. 59%).

Table 16

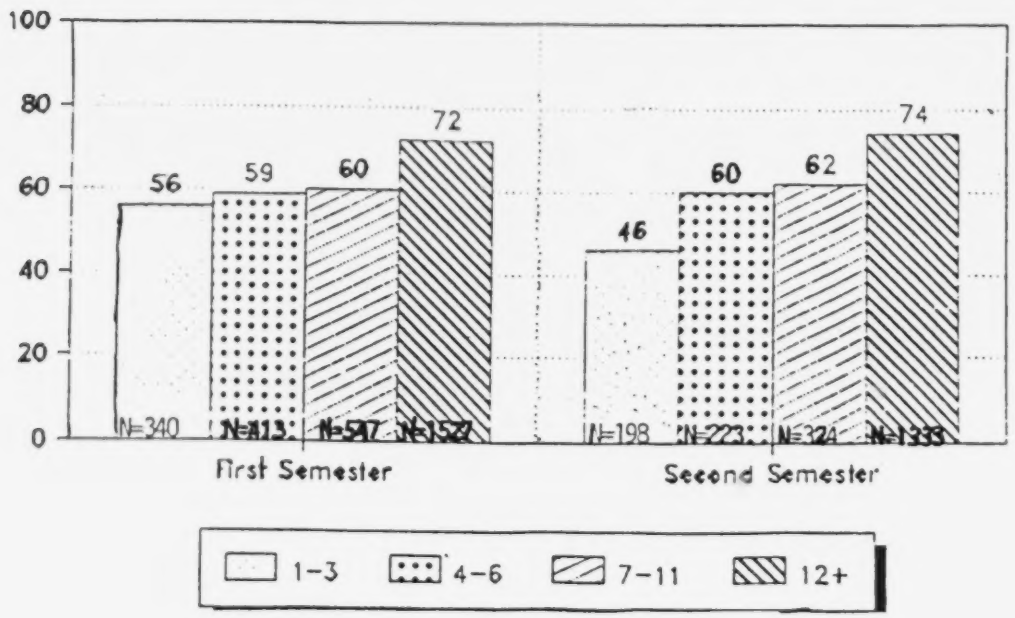
PERSISTENCE RATE BY UNITS TAKEN

Year Entered College	N	1st-to-2nd Sem.	1st-to-3rd Sem.	1st-to-4th Sem.
1985				
1-3 Units	1046 (47%)	50%	30%	24%
4-11 Units	665 (30%)	70%	44%	43%
12+ Units	529 (23%)	87%	66%	57%
1986				
1-3 Units	1033 (41%)	54%	36%	28%
4-11 Units	820 (33%)	70%	45%	42%
12+ Units	662 (26%)	82%	58%	51%
1987				
1-3 Units	1095 (40%)	55%	30%	
4-11 Units	850 (31%)	79%	48%	
12+ Units	784 (29%)	81%	60%	
1988				
1-3 Units	1039 (37%)	59%		
4-11 Units	992 (35%)	73%		
12+ Units	791 (28%)	87%		

Table 17

PERCENTAGE OF FIRST & SECOND SEMESTER UNITS COMPLETED WITH A PASSING GRADES

(Entered College in Fall 1988)



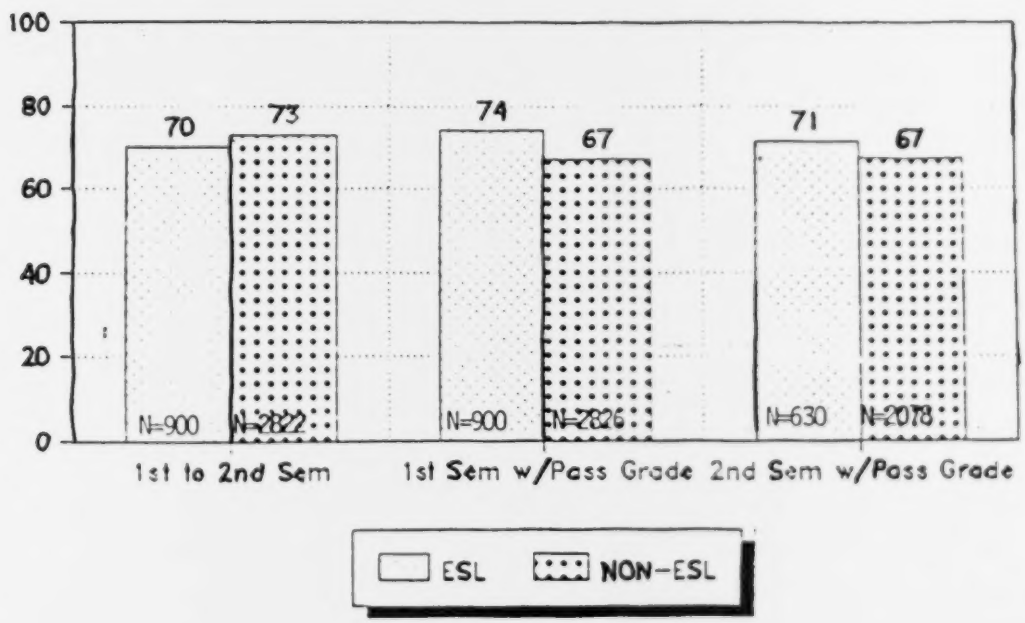
Students enrolled for 1-3 units were much more likely than full-time students to be on probation at the end of their first semester (24% vs. 6%) and at the end of their second semester (55% vs. 79%).

Performance of ESL Students

The first-to-second semester college persistence rates of ESL students were comparable to those of the non-ESL matriculated students (70% vs. 73%). The percentage of units completed by the matriculated ESL students was greater than those completed by the non-ESL matriculated students in their first semester (74% vs. 71% vs. 67%) at the college.

Table 18

COLLEGE PERSISTENCE RATES AND UNITS COMPLETED WITH PASSING GRADE FOR ESL VS. NON-ESL STUDENTS

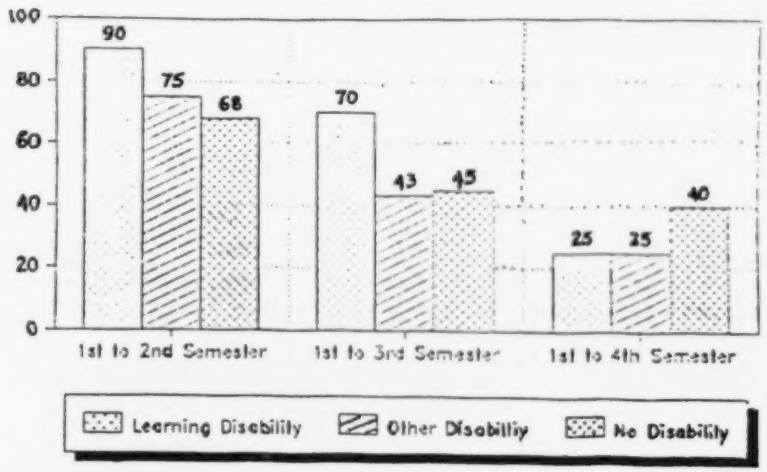


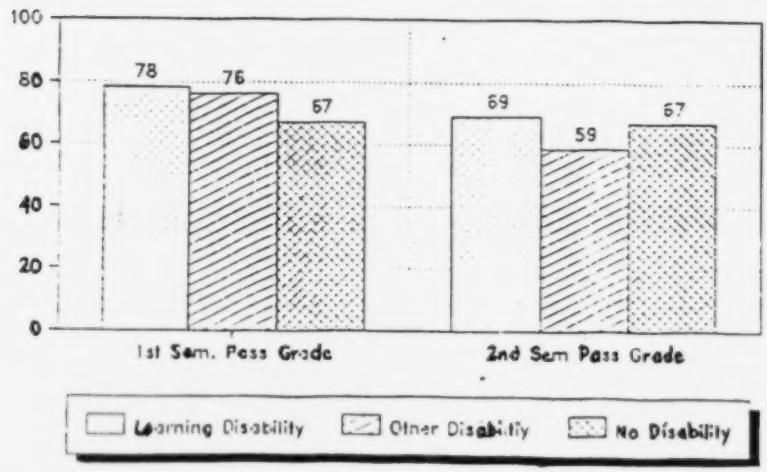
Performance of Students with a Learning Disability

Matriculated students who entered the college with a learning disability had higher semester-to-semester persistence rates and completed a greater percentage of their first and second semester units with a passing grade than did matriculated students without a learning disability.

Table 19
DISABILITY VS. NON-DISABILITY STUDENTS BY PERSISTENCE RATES AND PERCENTAGE OF PASSING GRADES IN FIRST TWO SEMESTER

(Percentage of Units Completed with Passing Grade)





IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR COLLEGE PRACTICES

The following is a summary of the implications of this study for institutional practices. Also included in this section of the report are specific recommendations for increasing the likelihood that students will achieve their educational objectives for attending college.

1. The positive findings of this study demonstrate that the college's support of the Matriculation Program is well warranted.

2. The college should identify institutional practices that will support matriculated students who enroll in classes for a second year. Practices that may encourage students to return to the college for a second year to complete their educational objectives include the granting of scholarships to second-year students, providing on-campus work-study jobs, and making available additional support services such as advising to ensure that these students are completing course requirements needed to complete a degree, certificate and/or transfer objective. This recommendation is based on the high college persistence rates of students who return to SBCC for a third semester.

Specific recommendations for encouraging matriculated students to continue their studies at SBCC for a second year are noted below.

3. The Foundation should raise funds for scholarships that would be granted to matriculated students who return to SBCC for a second year of study. The number of units completed and the GPA required to receive these scholarships needs to be determined.

4. General assistance funds should be granted to the departments to create meaningful teaching assistant and research assistant work-study jobs for students continuing their studies at SBCC for a second year. Faculty members in the departments should be responsible for spending a minimum of an hour each week working with their department's work-study students on the teaching and/or research-related assignments.

5. Special services should be provided to matriculated students who, at the end of their first year of study, have a moderate chance of completing their educational objectives. Those services could include assigning the students to trained tutors in subject areas in which they have experienced difficulty, assigning the students to group study sessions with others in their classes, and assigning the students to faculty advisors.

6. Departments should conduct receptions for their majors at the end of the spring semester. These receptions, designed to encourage students to return to the college the following fall, should be designed to make students feel that they are part of a program. These spring departmental receptions should also be the place where: (a) scholarships are granted to students who plan to return to the college; (b) teaching assistant and research assistant work-study offers are made; and (c) awards are given to students who have excelled in their course work and who have contributed to the advancement of the department.

7. The college should concentrate its efforts on assisting matriculated students who are enrolled in seven or more units. This recommendation is based on the finding that matriculated students enrolled for seven or more units were much more likely than those enrolled for fewer than seven units to complete their first year classes with a passing grade, persist in college, and be in good academic standing at the end of their first year of college.

8. Effective strategies need to be developed for increasing part-time matriculated students' (especially those enrolled for 1-3 units) commitment to their learning. Students enrolled in one-to-three units represent over one-third of the entering class of new matriculated students. The high course and college attrition rates of these students undermines the overall success of the college's Matriculation Program.

9. Additional efforts need to be made to increase the percentage of courses completed by first and second semester matriculated students. First-year students are "high risk" with regards to their chances of successfully completing courses in which they enroll and in their chances of continuing their studies at the college for a second and third semester.

The following recommendations are designed to increase students' chances of succeeding in their courses.

10. Faculty members teaching pre-collegiate and freshman-level courses should be encouraged to set aside 15 minutes of a class session during the first four weeks of the semester to meet with first semester students. The purpose of this session is to review the tips for succeeding in college (Appendix A) with the students. If at all possible, the faculty member should encourage these first semester students to form study groups and to set up individual appointments to meet with their to review their progress in the course.

11. Faculty members should be encouraged to incorporate the teaching of study skills into their courses. This recommendation is based on a study conducted at SBCC in Fall 1987 which showed that most faculty felt that a sizable portion of the students in their classes lacked the study skills needed to succeed in their classes and that a significant percentage of the students in these same classes agreed with this assessment. In order to address this deficiency in this important skill area, in-service workshops should be conducted to provide faculty members with strategies for incorporating the teaching of study skills into their classes. Faculty members teaching large classes should be the first ones to participate in this project.

12. Don Seaver's successful classroom research project on identifying high risk students and working collaboratively with college support services to address those problems should be replicated by other faculty members. Don Seaver should be given release time to work with other instructors to try out his strategy.

13 Faculty members should be encouraged to engage in classroom research projects designed to increase student learning and success in their classes. Workshops should be held to disseminate the instructional strategies that faculty have found to be effective and generalizable to other courses.

14. Faculty enrichment grants should be earmarked to support the development of approaches to increase the probability that first-semester students will complete the courses in which they enroll.

15. Counselors and faculty advisors need to encourage students to enroll in fewer units during their first two semesters at the college. Students should be constantly reminded of the number of hours of out-of-class time that is required for each unit in which they enroll. The students also need to be informed that they should allow additional time to seek assistance from tutors and from other students.

16. The college's policy of not allowing new matriculated students to enroll in classes until they have been assessed and advised should be adhered to. This is particularly true for students who enroll in the college during the late registration period. This recommendation is based on the low success rate of new matriculated students who didn't participate in the assessment program.

17. The factors that contribute to the relatively high course completion rates of ESL students should be identified and strategies should be developed for adapting these methods to other areas of the curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER STUDIES CONDUCTED AT SBCC THAT ARE RELATED TO THE EVALUATION OF THE MATRICULATION PROGRAM

In addition to the evaluation study presented in this report, two additional studies were conducted this past year that are related to the college's Matriculation Program. The following is a summary of the implications of these studies for improving the effectiveness of the college's Matriculation Program.

STUDY TO TRACK THE COURSE-TAKING PROFICIENCY OF MATRICULATED STUDENTS

This pilot study examined the general education course-taking patterns of students enrolled in SBCC in Fall 1989 who: (1) had an educational goal of transfer to UCSB or CSU; (2) who began their college studies at SBCC; and (3) who completed 30 or more units by the 1989 Fall Semester. Major findings of this study are summarized below.

- ☆ Close to 28% (1,163) of all continuing enrolled in Fall, 1989 had completed 30 or more units.

- ☆ Over one-third of the courses completed by students intending to transfer to UCSB or CSU were not transferable. It is likely that many of these courses were remedial English and math classes.

- ☆ A significant number of students planning to transfer to UCSB had not during their first 30 plus units of college completed courses in the following UCSB General Education Categories: English Literature; Non-English Literature; Fine Arts; and Science/Math. On a more positive note, a substantially greater percentage of the continuing students satisfied the UCSB General Education requirements in English 1 (74%).

- ☆ During their 30 plus units taken at SBCC, less than 30% of the continuing students intending to transfer to a CSU campus completed the CSU General Education requirements in the following areas: Foreign Languages (29%), Oral Communication (23%), and Arts and Humanities (16%).

The following recommendations are intended to increase the course-taking efficiency of students planning to transfer to a four-year college or university. More specifically, these recommendations are designed to reduce the number of non-transferable courses taken by students.

18. Transfer-oriented students participating in individual and group advising sessions should be required to complete a worksheet identifying the number of completed and proposed courses that fall into the following categories: UC and/or CSU Transfer; UC and/or CSU General Education Category Requirements; Skills Courses; and Non-Transfer/Non skills Courses. This exercise will increase student awareness of the consequences of the course selection decisions. It will also require the students to become actively involved

in the monitoring of their progress toward completing lower division requirements. Since many students do not complete their lower division general education Humanities and Fine Arts requirements, counselors and faculty advisors should stress the importance of completing courses in these areas.

19. At the end of each year, if not each semester, Project ASSIST reports should be sent to all native SBCC students, intending to transfer to UC and/or CSU. These reports should provide students and their advisors with a summary of the number of transferable and non-transferable units completed, a list of general education categories they have satisfied, and a list of those categories which still need to be satisfied.

20. A letter should be sent and a counselling appointment should be made for all transfer-oriented students who are not making satisfactory progress toward completing their lower division requirements. Satisfactory progress should be based on the ratio of transferable to non-transferable units completed and on the number of UC and/or CSU GE requirements completed.

21. A transfer unit audit should be added to the Student Transfer Task Inventory for TAP students.

22. Since a disproportionately low percentage of minority students complete their oral communications requirement, counselors and faculty members in the Communication Department should identify steps that could be taken to reduce the perceived barriers minority students may have regarding enrolling in communication courses.

23. The pilot research study completed last year on the course-taking efficiency of matriculated students should be repeated. The study should examine the ratio of non-transferable to transferable units completed for students in different unit completion categories; examine GE course-taking patterns separately for students having completed 6-15, 16-30, 31-55, and 56 or more units; and track the progress of students from English 1 to English 2 classes.

STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' SCORES ON THE ASSESSMENT TESTS AND THEIR GRADES IN THEIR FIRST SEMESTER COURSES

The findings and recommendations of the study on predicting student grades in their first semester courses are presented in a report by Elaine Cohen and Jack Friedlander. One of the findings most directly related to the subject of this report was that students with college-level skills in reading, writing, and/or math were more likely to receive a grade of "C" or higher in their classes than students in the same class whose skills were one level below college level. In most instances, about half of the students in an introductory college-level course whose reading or writing skills were one level below college successfully completed that course. With a few exceptions, this finding held for students in various ethnic groups.

24. Special interventions need to be identified for students who enroll in courses that are one or more levels above their basic skills level in reading, English and/or math. These individuals should be encouraged to enroll in needed remedial courses or modules concurrently with their college-level classes. The students should also be advised to limit the number of units in which they enroll during their first semester and they should be encouraged to seek assistance from tutors assigned to their classes.

25. A profile should be developed that shows students their probability of succeeding in particular categories of classes. This information should be used during the orientation and advising sessions. The findings of the study demonstrated that using scores on the assessment tests along with other information about students' educational backgrounds enabled the college to predict with a high degree of accuracy whether or not students can succeed in their first semester courses.

Orientation, Assessment & Advising Contribute to Student Success

□ **Participate in the college's outstanding Orientation, Assessment and Advising Program.** New students who participate in this program are much more likely to complete their courses and continue their education than new students who don't participate in the program.

□ **Follow the advice provided by the college regarding which courses to take.** The vast majority of students who decide to enroll in a class that is at a higher level than what is recommended do *not* complete that course.

□ **Take action if you have weaknesses in your reading, writing, math and/or study skills.** Students who do not correct skill deficiencies reduce their chances of success by half.

□ **Enroll in courses during the regular registration period.** Students who enroll in classes during the late registration periods often are not able to choose classes they need because they are already full. Students who enroll in courses after the first week of the semester miss valuable instruction and are less likely to complete these courses.

□ **Allow adequate time for studying and taking advantage of college support services.** A rule of thumb: for every hour of class, you should plan on three hours of outside study.

□ **Attend classes on a regular basis** and keep up with your course assignments.

□ **See your instructor or adviser for assistance,** if you are experiencing difficulty in a class.

□ **Act on your instructor's or adviser's referral to a college support service.** Students who take advantage of college support services in a timely manner are much more likely to succeed.

□ **Schedule an adequate amount of time on campus** to take advantage of college services and to meet with your instructors outside of class.

Characteristics of Success

A recent Santa Barbara City College research study showed that students who took advantage of the opportunities for learning available at the college received better grades, made more progress toward achieving their education goals, and were more satisfied with college than those who put less effort into their learning.

Based on our research findings, we offer the following suggestions for increasing your chances of success at SBCC . . .

1. *Get to Know Your Instructors.*

. . . *Visit* with your instructors after class.
. . . *Make* appointments to meet with your instructors in their offices.
. . . *Discuss* ideas for term papers or other class projects with your instructors.
. . . *Discuss* your career plans and ambitions with your instructors.

2. *Be an Active Learner in Your Classes.*

. . . *Participate* in classroom discussions.
. . . *Summarize* major points and information in your textbooks and notes.
. . . *Try* to explain the material to another student or friend.
. . . *Do* additional reading on topics that were introduced and discussed in class.
. . . *Try* to find flaws in arguments that were made in assigned readings or in classroom discussions.

3. *Use the Library.*

. . . *Ask* the librarian for help in finding material.
. . . *Run* down leads; look for additional references that other authors have cited.
. . . *Use* bibliographies and indexes to find journal articles and books.
. . . *Prepare* a bibliography or set of references for a term paper or report.

4. *Improve Your Writing Skills.*

. . . *Use* a dictionary or thesaurus to look up the proper word meanings.
. . . *Think* about grammar, sentence structure, paragraphs, word choice and sequence of ideas as you are writing your papers.
. . . *Write* a rough draft of a paper or essay and then revise it before handing it in.
. . . *Ask* your instructors for advice and help to improve your writing skills.
. . . *Seek* advice from the Writing Lab to improve your writing.
. . . *Talk* to your instructors about the comments they make on papers you have written.

5. *Get to Know Other Students.*

. . . *Make* friends with students whose ages, ethnic backgrounds and interests are different from your own.
. . . *Form* study groups with other students in your class.

6. *Participate in Cultural Activities.*

. . . *Attend* art exhibits, music concerts and plays offered at the college and in the community.
. . . *Talk* about art, music and theater with other students at the college.
. . . *Read* or discuss the opinions of drama critics.

7. *Take Advantage of College Support Services.*

. . . *Talk* to a counselor or faculty adviser about the courses you should take.
. . . *Visit* the Career Center to explore your career interests and learn about the skills needed for different jobs.
. . . *Use* help available in the Reading/Study Skills Center to improve your vocabulary, spelling, grammar, reading and study skills.
. . . *Use* help available in the Writing Lab to improve your skills in writing papers and taking essay tests.
. . . *Seek* help from tutors when you need assistance in your classes.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges FEB 9 1990